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Indiana Cultural Districts 2021 Guidelines

THE INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION

On behalf of the people of Indiana, the [Indiana Arts Commission](#) (IAC) advocates engagement with the arts to enrich the quality of individual and community life. The IAC encourages the presence of the arts in communities of all sizes while promoting artistic quality and expression.

The IAC advocates arts development opportunities across the state, and stewards effective use of public and private resources for the arts. It stimulates public interest in, and participation with, Indiana's diverse arts resources and cultural heritage. [The IAC works to enhance public awareness of the arts, life-long learning opportunities, and arts education programs.](#) Governed by a [15-member board of gubernatorial appointees](#), the IAC serves all citizens and regions of the state.

CREATIVE COMMUNITY PATHWAY

The IAC's Creative Community Pathway is a roadmap for any Indiana community to start, focus, or deepen arts and culture-based strategies to grow community wellbeing. The goal of the Creative Community Pathway is to support deeper understanding and integration of the arts by and in communities, measured in three ways:

1. Community leaders incorporate artists, arts and culture and creativity into community dialogue, planning decision-making and problem solving around community opportunities, including around equity.
2. Formal and informal community leaders value the arts for workforce development, quality of life, and community wellbeing for all.
3. All Indiana's communities have thriving, vibrant arts activity and develop their creative economy, including efforts to equitably recruit and retain a core creative workforce.

The Creative Community Pathway focuses on five core pillars: Arts and Culture Identity, Cultural Development and Leadership, Community Development, Economic Development/Tourism Development, Cultural District Management and Planning.

The Indiana Cultural District designation is one possible goal for communities using the Creative Community Pathway. Another possible goal of the Creative Community Pathway is the Spotlight Community recognition. This one-time recognition celebrates communities who are actively working to weave together its unique, authentic arts and culture identity and community wellbeing. Read more about Spotlight Communities and the Creative Community Pathway on our website.

INDIANA CULTURAL DISTRICT DESIGNATION

An Indiana Cultural District is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area with a unique, authentic arts and cultural identity. This designation acknowledges an area of a community as a hub for creative activity through its history, structures, activities, organizations, and reputation. It indicates the community embraces arts and culture as assets for tourism, community development and economic development. Additionally, it demonstrates that the community has

invested in long term strategies, planning, resources, and leadership to actively sustain the creative ecosystem and embed the arts and culture sector into community life.

The IAC provides project funding for designated Indiana Cultural Districts, facilitates statewide collaboration through the Indiana Cultural District Consortium, and provides other capacity building opportunities for cultural district leadership.

Once a cultural district receives a Statewide Cultural District designation, the designation will last for the duration of the program unless the cultural district fails to comply with annual reporting requirements or the IAC Commissioners determine the cultural district to no longer be viable for the community. Acceptance into the program signifies an ongoing commitment to the development and sustainability of the cultural district. Required annual reports will allow the IAC to assess the economic and community impact of the cultural district on the city, town or larger area it serves.

Ready for the Indiana Cultural District Designation?

We recommend using the LOI criteria to self-assess your community's readiness for this process. Check out our online resources for communities, or give us a call for additional help.

Indiana Cultural District Designation Process

1. LOI Process, Support Team review and Spotlight Community Recognition

Submit an LOI through the IAC's online system by February 27, 2020, 4:30 pm ET. LOIs will be reviewed by a small group of professionals with expertise in areas important to the LOI criteria such as arts leadership, community development, tourism, etc. The Support Team will discuss and determine if each LOI criterion is **currently** met. You'll receive feedback and recommended next steps from the Support Team, and they may recommend Spotlight Community recognition. Spotlight Communities are invited to move on to the Indiana Cultural District application. Spotlight Community is a one-time recognition.

If the Support Team does not recommend Spotlight Community recognition, your community is encouraged to focus on the specific areas for growth which the Support Team has identified. If your community addresses those specific areas, it may be automatically recognized as a Spotlight Community at the next available opportunity. IAC staff and/or a member of the Support Team will schedule a phone conversation to discuss feedback and recommended next steps.

2. Online Application

Submit an Indiana Cultural District application. Indiana Cultural District applications must be submitted through the online system by April 1, 2021, 4:30 pm eastern time. IAC staff will review application materials to ensure the application is complete and eligible for panel review.

3. Panel Review

Eligible applications will be reviewed and assessed by a panel of professionals with expertise in areas important to cultural districts such as economic and regional development, public art, historic preservation, tourism, community affairs, etc. This panel is trained by IAC staff to use the full evaluation criteria below. The meeting will be open to the public for observation, broadcast live via webinar, and may be recorded. Applicants are encouraged to attend. Applicants cannot lobby the panel on behalf of their applications before, during, or after the panel meeting. The panel meeting date and time will be emailed directly to the applicant and posted on the [Indiana Cultural Districts](#) web page.

4. Site Visit (tentative)

After the panel meets and reviews applications, a site visit may be conducted by IAC staff before recommendations are presented to the IAC Commissioners.

5. Indiana Cultural District Designation

All applicants will be notified of their application status via email after the Commission meets in June 2021 to ratify the panel's recommendations for Indiana Cultural District designation.

If the panel does not recommend designation, your community may bypass the LOI process and re-apply at the next opportunity.

Timeline	<i>all times eastern</i>
LOI due	Thursday, February 27, 2020, 4:30 pm
Support Team site visit or phone call	November 2020
LOI approval and Spotlight Community recognition	December 2020
Indiana Cultural District Application due	April 1, 2021, 4:30 pm
Public application review meeting (Zoom)	Early May 2021 (TBA)
Indiana Cultural District Designation announcement	Mid-June 2021 (by email)
Indiana Cultural District 2021 Annual Report due	February 2022 (TBA)

Eligibility

- The applicant must have been recognized as a Spotlight Community, or demonstrated it has addressed the areas for growth that the Support Team has previously identified.
- The applicant **MUST** be the municipal government of the area in which the proposed cultural district is located.
- A single organization (501c3 or municipality) is identified as a main point of contact and fiscal agent between the IAC and the cultural district.
- Applicants must have a local cultural district designation by the governmental body in which the district is located. The designation can be in process when the application is submitted but evidence of completion must be submitted before a state designation is officially given.
- Two or more cities, towns or counties that extend across a common boundary may apply jointly for statewide cultural district designation. The above requirements must still be met.

Reconsideration Policy and Appeal Process

The reconsideration process is designed to review the method and fairness of the IAC decision concerning an application. This process is not intended to impose a different panel's choices/judgment over the original panel's decision. Dissatisfaction with the denial of program entrance is not sufficient reason for an appeal. Click [here](#) for more information.

Annual Report

Participation in the program will begin upon official notification and continue as long as the applicant remains in good standing with the IAC and in compliance with all reporting requirements. The annual report will be accessible through the IAC online system and must be submitted electronically. For all cultural districts accepted into the statewide program, there will be a report due annually in January for the length of your participation in the program. The 2019 annual report will be due on February 6, 2020.

Indiana Cultural District Logo

Designees are strongly encouraged to use the Indiana Cultural District logo (displayed on the right) in publicity, digital and printed materials related to the cultural district. Branding guidelines may be found on the [Indiana Cultural Districts Resources web page](#).

This program is supported by the Indiana General Assembly and the [National Endowment for the Arts](#).

CRITERIA

The Support Team will determine if the applicant **currently** meets the criteria marked (LOI) to make recommendations.

The panel will use the full criteria to assess each Indiana Cultural District application. Applicants must **currently** meet each criterion. Applications must score an average of 85 points or more to be recommended for Indiana Cultural District designation.

Each bullet point is worth five points, and panelists will use the following scoring scale:

1 point	Not demonstrated whatsoever.
2 points	Significant areas to improve to demonstrate this criterion.
3 points	Minor areas to improve to demonstrate this criterion.
4 points	Demonstrates this criterion fully.
5 points	Demonstrates this criterion fully and also shows innovation and leadership in this area.

Arts and Culture Identity (20 points total)

The cultural district is recognizable and has a high concentration of cultural assets that are unique and authentic to the community.

- The cultural district has a **unique, authentic** arts and cultural identity, and it is articulated clearly. (LOI)
- The cultural district identity and experience is connected to the **history** or long-standing traditions and culture of the place and its residents. (LOI)
- The cultural district currently has a high concentration and a variety of types of **arts and culture assets** and programming available year-round and on nights and weekends. (LOI)
- The cultural district is **recognizable and well-known** (both physically and in reputation) to residents and visitors as a vibrant center for creativity, arts and culture. (LOI)

Cultural Development and Leadership (up to 20 points)

The cultural district is a vibrant center of culture. It generates creative activity, energy and leadership.

- Organizations and programming in the cultural district **empower residents and visitors to learn** about arts and culture and express themselves creatively. (LOI)
- **Artists (of any discipline or approach) are active** in the cultural district such as offering programs, selling products, using studio space, etc. (LOI)
- Artists and arts and culture organizations **partner with others to identify resources** that will sustain their work and life in the community, such as small business resources, professional development, access to leadership or special funding.
- Artistic and community collaboration and partnerships spur **new and innovative cultural and arts assets** (such as temporary or permanent art spaces, activities, local or visiting artists, etc.) within or nearby the cultural district.

Community Development (up to 20 points)

The cultural district is a livable, walkable, accessible place for all people. The cultural district integrates the arts and cultural sector into measurable community development outcomes.

- An existing community development plan includes **quality of life** goals for those who live and work in or near the cultural district (i.e. access to workspace, housing affordability, access to public transportation, access to groceries, safety, access to a high quality school, etc.). (LOI)
- Community development goals involving the cultural district will clearly support the community's **growth and wellbeing in measurable outcomes.**
- An **inclusive group of perspectives** (i.e. diversity in race, gender, ability, grassroots, leadership, etc.) continually informs community development plans involving the cultural district.
- **Local artists and/or arts and culture leaders have been and continue to be involved** as partners in the ongoing planning and implementation of community development strategies that impact the cultural district and/or local creative ecosystem.

Economic Development/Tourism Development (up to 20 points)

The cultural district is recognized as a valuable economic development strategy for the community.

- The local economic development plan incorporates strategies to **support and build upon arts and culture assets** in the cultural district. (LOI)
- **Local artists and/or arts and culture leaders have been and continue to be involved as partners** in the ongoing planning and implementation of economic development strategies that impact the cultural district and/or local creative ecosystem.
- Existing assets like historic structures are recognized, embraced, utilized and/or future opportunities to do so are included in **revitalization goals or efforts**.
- The cultural district **partners with local and/or regional tourism** such as in-kind marketing, participation on a guiding team, etc.

Cultural District Management and Planning (up to 20 points)

The cultural district has local support, a plan, adequate resources and a sustainable leadership/ management model that will ensure its growth.

- The cultural district has a **current work plan** with clear, measurable goals.
- A strong, sustainable **leadership/management** model exists to move the cultural district plan forward.
- A guiding team of **relevant partners** actively collaborates to move the cultural district's plan forward. This team includes local artists and/or cultural sector leaders, key public, nonprofit and private sector leaders, tourism, community and economic development partners, and others as appropriate. (LOI)
- **Appropriate resources** exist (i.e. funding, partners, etc.) to move the cultural district plan forward. (LOI)

Ready to apply? Only applications submitted online will be accepted. www.in.gov/apply